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ABSTRACT

This paper examines inequalities in education resulting from differences in community social class, using data from a study of high school teachers' work in different communities conducted in the 1980's and repeated in the 1990's. The 1985 study of schools in upper middle class, working class, and lower class neighborhoods indicated that there were enormous discrepancies in students' education. However, differences in functioning of schools in different social class settings were effectively hidden from view by talk of the American high school as a single, unified institution and by sociological analysis that saw students' social class background as the source of their differences in academic achievement. In 1995, a similar study was conducted in five of the original schools, with interviews of teachers and principals, classroom observations, and document collection. Again, the differences between schools in communities that differed in social class was striking. Though all schools shared several features (layout, daily schedule, pattern of classes, curricular scope, and teacher responsibility), there were noticeable differences depending on the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood. The schools differed greatly in resources, custody and control, sorting function, general socialization, and academic education. (Contains 72 references.) (SM)

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA, April 15, 1998

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Veiled Inequalities: The Hidden Effects of Community Social Class on High School Teachers' Perspectives and Practices[1]

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The broad sweep of public education in the United States is conceptualized differently from the way it is structured. Symbolically, education is a national phenomenon. Public discourse about education contains easy, frequent references to "The American High School" as is evident in the titles of many reform reports of the 1980s (Boyer 1983; Cusick 1983; Sedlak et al. 1986; Sizer 1992; Sizer 1984). There are newspaper columns aplenty on the dilemmas of American education seen as a single entity capable of discussion as a whole. But structurally education is a local phenomenon; it is the formal responsibility of the states and most states delegate large portions of their powers to local school districts.

In metropolitan areas, where most students now live, those districts are nearly coterminous with the cities and then with each of a set of much smaller suburban communities.[2] Those suburban communities have ordinances concerning lot sizes and multiple family dwellings and commercial property that work together with local reputation to create a high degree of economic segregation. In each area a hierarchy of reputation reflects the social class of each of the suburbs. Metropolitan real estate markets both drive and reflect these reputations. In many cases religious and ethnic characters also attach to these suburbs and in almost all race is highly homogenous.

These social class difference among suburbs and their school districts are closely connected to education. The reputations of the schools both reflect the social class of the community and, when positive, become a magnet for parents whose economic status is high enough to afford housing there. Real estate ads often refer to school attendance areas for houses where community names do not clearly indicate it. Similar houses on different sides of community and school district lines can differ in price by tens of thousands of dollars. Nor is this process solely economic. There are practices in the real estate market that also keep not only the racial but the religious, ethnic, and other social characteristics of these communities relatively homogeneous.

Strikingly, however, there has been only a very modest amount of research on the ways in which these schools in carefully sorted homogeneous enclaves provide different educations for the children of these communities.[3] Even when occasionally there are widely read works such as Kozol's Savage Inequalities (1991) that point out these discrepancies, they make only a temporary mark in the public mind and, if popular, they have little resonance in the technical research literature.[4] These different communities also provide very different contexts for their teachers, but the literature on

teaching is almost silent about these differences.

This paper is addressed to the veil that covers these inequalities and to a schematic sketch of some of the differences in teachers' work in high schools in communities differing in social class that research I have done suggests need to be further studied. While much of this paper is theoretical, it is grounded in an empirical study in which this topic arose more inductively than deductively.

The Initial Study

In 1985, I was part of a group at the University of Wisconsin who wrote the successful proposal for a National Center on Effective Secondary Schools. My project in the Center was a study of high school teachers' working lives. Its purpose, as part of the overall Center emphasis, was to look for organizational conditions that facilitated and hindered teachers' ability to be engaged with their work. Because I am a sociologist, in constructing my sample of schools to study, it seemed important that we include variation in social class context. We chose six schools[5]; two were in upper middle class communities, two in solid working class to lower middle class communities, and two in poor communities in central cities. Over the course of 1986-87, my graduate assistants[6] and I visited each school for something over two weeks with a team of two to three researchers at each school. At each school, we followed six students and eight teachers through a whole school day. We interviewed those eight teachers and ten others chosen to give us diverse perspectives on teachers' work. We attended faculty meetings and school events that occurred during our stay. We collected relevant documents ranging from class assignments to teacher schedules to student newspapers. We gathered publicly available statistics about the schools.

There was a co-ordinated study in the Center in which Richard Rossmiller studied principals' understandings of the arrangements necessary to facilitate teachers' engagement. He and his graduate assistant[7] spent a week in each of the same schools. They followed administrators, interviewed them, and collected documents. We met together as a large team to share our observations and begin the analytic process.

We started our fieldwork at Cherry Glen North High School[8], a high school in an outer suburb of The City, a mid-sized Midwestern city with a metropolitan population of about one million. All of our suburban schools were around The City and one of our city schools was in it. Cherry Glen serves a combination of two very wealthy communities; it is one of the half dozen wealthiest districts in the state. Our second school was Charles R. Drew High School in a desperately poor and crime ridden area of The Metropolis, one of the nation's largest cities in a different state from The City.

The differences in the daily work of these two schools left us reeling. It seemed that everything was different, the feel of the halls, the behavior of the students, the concerns of the teachers, and most strikingly the rhythm and content of classes--even

when they had the same title and used the same textbook.

Commonalities in American Schools as "Real School"

It was at this point in the study that two experiences symbolized issues we were seeing and lead me to a critical insight. One occurred in a setting I had no intention of studying, a luncheon at the Center in the midst of a meeting with our national advisory board. The general topic of the day was the question of the possibility of high school reform and the best levers that could be found to provide openings for such reform. The other five members of the group at my table for lunch included top officials from organizations such as the national teachers' unions and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, as well as a sociologist from another university. They agreed that a major problem in developing support for reform is the "fact" that all American high schools are alike. This uniformity, they agreed, makes it difficult to get school staffs to imagine anything different because there is such uniformity that other patterns do not seem possible. With vivid images in my mind of the differences I had just seen, I argued that the schools I had seen were hardly alike but very different. They all assured me that American high schools are all alike.

My current experience of difference in the schools, which I did not doubt, clearly was totally discrepant with the reality about which the members of this group, persons for whom I had great respect, were not only individually but collectively so sure. This unexpected data had provided me with what anthropologist Michael Agar (1986) calls a breakdown. Breakdowns lead one to realize that one is not comprehending the interpretive scheme within which the behavior of the people one is studying does indeed make sense to them, though not to the analyst. One must then alter one's own interpretive scheme to include elements that will make the observed behavior comprehensible.

In time I came to see that my colleagues at the luncheon were right--in one framework. If one considers the important elements of schools to inhere in their physical, temporal and social structures and in their formal technical procedures, then they were absolutely correct that despite the decentralized structures of control in this country, high schools are strikingly and importantly alike. Physical, temporal, and social structures and the formalities of curricular scope and sequence were clearly the elements of schools that they considered to be crucial to the educative process and to the possibility of reform.

However, if one enters the flow of daily life in the schools, and looks at the nature of conversation and activity through seven to nine class periods in a student's day, then there are large, important differences among high schools. Schools in communities that differ in social class are strikingly, critically different from each other if one measures them by the daily content of classes in courses that may use the same names and the same textbooks in classrooms the same size with one teacher and nearly the same number of students.

My second breakdown, a related one, occurred as we tried to make sense of the second school we studied, Charles Drew High School, in a poor urban neighborhood that was totally African-American. This school served a student body where 60% of the students scored in the bottom quartile on the Iowa Test of Achievement as sophomores, after a large freshman dropout. 50% of the students drop out before the end of high school. The litany of social distractions in poor neighborhoods which is much more commonly recited now than it was in the mid-80s was certainly present. We heard about deviance in the area--gangs, drugs, robbery and assault--and about poverty and its associated ills--welfare, early pregnancy, house fires, and constant residential mobility.

The administration and faculty made a lot of adjustments in an attempt to adapt to the student body. Discipline and attendance policies had flexibilities. A large number of personnel were used for supervision who attempted to get to know the students personally. There was respect and connection between most of the staff and the students. The staff collectively and in many cases individually made an effort to develop and maintain relationships with parents and representatives of the community.

But there were deep disjunctions in the school. The teachers attempted to adjust to the students' weak skills, but also to teach the curriculum indicated by their course titles. Many teachers spent at least part of their time instructing students in skills and material that were far more basic than those the title of a course would suggest. They also presented material that did indeed fit the traditional high school course labels. Teachers varied in the mix of their compromise.

Despite classroom compromise, the formal curriculum of the school went to an extreme. The principal had raised course requirements above district minima. Students had to take four years of English, four of mathematics, four of science and three of social studies to graduate. Furthermore, there were no electives for students working on more basic material to fill out these requirements. For example, students progressed from freshmen English through American literature to English literature and then to a senior class in composition and world literature. In that senior class they read, among other works, Huxley's Brave New World and Dante's Inferno. In science they moved from general science, to biology, to chemistry, to physics.

The gaps between the students' skills and the ambitious course menu were bridged, in part, by allowing students to progress without passing all earlier courses in a sequence. For example, students were allowed to progress to physics after taking, but not necessarily passing, biology and chemistry and without a requirement that they pass geometry and advanced algebra. The physics teachers taught fundamental measurement skills, and one said that she hoped to complete mechanics with students having a solid grasp of it by the end of the year but might get no further. Teachers at other schools told me they would complete mechanics before Christmas. In senior English, we saw students practicing and struggling with the elementary forms and skills of a business letter, including basic sentence and paragraph structures and

capitalization, even though they would be reading Dante's Inferno later, and were currently engaged in reading criticism of Huxley's Brave New World preparatory to writing papers about it.

A formal curriculum as demanding as that at Cherry Glen, including texts and primary readings that were just as difficult, seemed in disjunction with student skills and written work that were infinitely weaker. Classes included material at very different levels of difficulty under a single title, while uneven attendance and frequent multiple tardy arrivals to class frayed at the edges of intense group attention to a cumulative learning experience.[9]

As our research team discussed what we had seen at Drew in a meeting, trying to make sense of why Drew's leaders would develop a curriculum even more demanding than that of most high schools, I found myself saying, "it makes them a real school." As soon as I had said it, I realized that the statement was the key to the puzzle. It was very important to the staff of this school that their students get as demanding and thorough an education, at least on paper, as that of students in the most prestigious schools in the suburbs. Several of the leaders told us during our visit that their students are as capable as those going to the best known high school in the suburbs of this city, but that it may take them a little longer to reach the same level of knowledge and accomplishment. The curriculum was a symbolic statement of their equality and their worth.[10]

The breakdown in our understanding that came from Drew's apparently disjunctive practices was resolved by our new understanding of the symbolic meaning of following the curricular forms of the common American High School. I realized that the structural, technical, and curricular forms common to The American High School have important symbolic value. Whether they are technically effective or not, they allow struggling schools to make clear that they are Real Schools. The students and teachers who struggle daily with students' weak skills for traditional high school work are still Real Teachers and Real Students, because they are participating in the national ritual of doing high school the way it is done everywhere in the United States.[11]

I wrote about the technical and structural regularities of high schools as a drama called Real School.[12] Participation in the drama gives a sense both of national unity and of symbolic legitimacy to the participants. However, Real School provides only a script. The actors play their parts in theaters that provide quite different stages, props, directors, and rehearsal time. The actors are independent-minded. Especially in some settings they are unpredictable as they interpret their characters, do or do not mind their cues, and even may or may not remain on stage to the end of the play. But despite this enormous disparity in the play that is actually produced, the title and the script of Real School provide a sense of solidity, legitimacy, and unity that is very important to all concerned. The effects of community social class on teachers' work and the tension of these differences with the commonalities of Real School became the focus of the study.

Real School as Veil

The commonalities of Real School then are part of the veil that covers the reality of very different daily activities and very different educational opportunities for students in communities that differ in social class. Americans can speak symbolically of American education and The American High School at the national level with a sense that there is a genuine reality to which those words point. The significant differences in the actual experiences of students in these high schools according to the communities in which their parents' social circumstances place them become invisible inside a language that references national institutional patterns of education and a single American High School.[13]

In the contemporary United States education serves not just as a resource for the society in developing its young and for children in fulfilling their potentialities. It also serves as a screen through which individuals pass that sorts them for places of differential power, privilege, and economic reward in the society. That screen seems far fairer and more egalitarian to most people if the institution called The American High School is the same everywhere. If students' actual experiences in the concrete high schools named by this abstraction are heavily dependent on the social class of their communities, then its worth as a fair and egalitarian sorting device could be called into question.

It is in this context, that it is important to note that while there has been little research on the impact of social class differences among communities on educational quality, there is no lack of families eager to pay higher prices for housing in communities of higher social class than for similar housing elsewhere. Professionals in social research and the media looking at the "big picture" think about education differently from parents looking for a context to nurture individual children. It is not news to tell the middle class and upper middle class parents of this country that schools in communities higher in social class may offer better education to their children than do those in communities for more modestly situated parents. These parents come to educational matters with different questions and different perspectives and therefore different perceptions from professionals in education--even when they are the same people. With their dollars and their housing choices, they bet on the differences among examples of The American High School that professionals do not choose to investigate.

School Effects Literature as a Veil

The civil rights movement, after the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954), did raise questions of equality in schooling based on residence. One of the few contexts in which inequality of education by community has been pursued has been that of *de facto* racial segregation of schools based on residence. Though the civil rights movement cast this issue in racial terms, inequality in economic and class terms was also made visible in its light.

Another source of formal contention has been differences in funding of schools in different local school districts according to the considerable differences in their wealth. The decision of the Supreme Court in *San Antonio vs. Rodriguez* (1973) that differences in school funding do not violate children's constitutional rights sent this issue back to political contention over funding formulas in each of the fifty states.

Before the *San Antonio vs. Rodriguez* decision, Congress, under pressure from the Civil Rights movement, funded the 1966 Colemăn report (Coleman et al. 1966) in hopes it would give them scientific justification to even out school funding as a means to equalize educational opportunity. Instead, Coleman, following the procedures of state of the art survey research, reported that once he held individual students' social class and race constant little else seemed to matter. He found that the school inputs that money can buy and large scale surveys of the time could measure--state of the facility, books in the library, teachers' salaries, amount of training, and experience in a school--made little difference to student achievement. Stated in those terms, there has been little evidence in the intervening years to challenge his findings.

These findings were widely read, in accordance with the individualistic tilt of U.S. culture, to mean that the characteristics that individual children bring with them from their home and community experience are so potent that there is little that schools can do to equalize their learning. In the media, it was sometimes read as "schools don't make a difference". In the profession, it was read as "differences between schools seem to be insignificant for achievement". Head Start and Title I as remedies are based on this logic of fixing the individual child and assuming there is no inequality in the schools.

The logic of the argument has been challenged in several ways, however. First, Coleman's unit of analysis has been questioned. He made his measurements at the school level and found as much variation within schools as between them. Schools are never completely homogeneous and there is a societal imperative to rank. Teachers who gave all or most of their students As would not fare well with principals or colleagues. This imperative to rank creates failure as well as success and may encourage the development of dispersion in skills and scores.

More important, learning happens in classrooms, not whole schools. Coleman studied high schools which are larger and more diverse than elementary and middle schools. High school classes are often tracked. There is a large literature on tracking that demonstrates that tracking does exacerbate initial differences in achievement.[14] Mean scores at the school level do not show these internal effects of schooling on achievement.

In our study, we found that the more internally diverse a school was, the more tracked it was. Cherry Glen, a high status school with a small number of significantly less high status students, found a variety of ingenious institutional ways of sealing those students off from the rest of its students. Differences between tracks resembled, in

paler ways, differences between schools at different social class levels. But internal differentiation within schools, while important, is not the point at issue in this paper.

For the logic of this paper, it is more important that studies that hold social class of individuals constant may consequently hold constant many characteristics of their schools. If schools are relatively homogeneous in student social class, there may be processes in those schools associated with students', parents' and communities' class characteristics that intensify the effects of social class in the home to support or inhibit children's learning. When schools are relatively homogeneous in social class, when one holds students' social class constant, one simultaneously holds these unmeasured school characteristics constant.

Unless those characteristics are independently measured and their effects studied, when student social class is held constant their effects are also removed along with those of students' class. The kinds of school characteristics associated with social class described later in this paper are not easily captured with quantitative measures, especially those available in the early studies of school inputs, as opposed to those now available with instruments like those used in High School and Beyond. If such school characteristics are not identified and analyzed, the differences in achievement that are removed and "explained" when student social class is held constant may in fact be their effects, not the effects of (individual) students' social class. But if student social class is believed to explain the variation, then researchers are discouraged from looking for school characteristics that may explain differences in achievement with class and race. Further, if such school characteristics are at work in elementary and middle schools which are smaller and more socially homogeneous than high schools, by the time students reach the more diverse high schools, differences in their achievement by social class would already be reflecting these differences in previous school experience, not just differences in home and community experience. But studies that remove high school students' social class before looking for school effects, would consider these differences individual differences, not associated with schools.

To explore this hypothesis, an immediate question concerns the impact of schooling on students who go to school with peers different from themselves. Coleman did measure the effects of schools on children who attended schools where the majority of children differed from themselves in social class or race. He found that attending schools of higher status than one's own tended to improve achievement. However, this is the one of his findings that has not consistently held up. Instead, there has been a history of conflicting findings on this point (Gamoran 1992). To sort this conflict out, one would want to look carefully at the unit of analysis issue. It is very possible that some schools separate out students of a different status from the majority and give them different experiences--as did our Cherry Glen. It is also possible that really diverse schools are so heavily tracked as to be many schools under one roof.

The issue of processes in schools that are unmeasured and highly correlated with student social class has been explored to some extent. The effective schools

literature[15] in looking at schools for poor children that created higher than expected scores, sought elements of schooling that make a difference despite social class. Importantly, the list of school characteristics that this literature brought forward held little resemblance to the quantitatively measurable inputs that were measured in early survey studies like Coleman's.

Logically, this literature could have asked about common characteristics of schools that produced the expected effects of low achievement for low SES children[16]. Similarly, it could have looked at schools that produced lower than expected results in higher social class settings and at those that created very high results. In other words, it could have looked at all logical possibilities of effects from schools' organizational practices that either enhance and inhibit the social class influences that students bring to school with them.

A research program that followed this logic might very well find that while students' initial advantages and disadvantages do affect their school learning, there are ordinary, routine differences in the practice of schools that are influenced by the dominant social class of their students. At least as important, there may be differences in the ordinary practices of schools that reflect the social class of parents considered both individually and collectively and the social class of the surrounding community. In small suburban school districts, the schools are governed by a community of more or less homogeneous social class.

Ironically, Coleman himself later looked for internal and contextual organizational processes that affect achievement in his study of Catholic schools. His argument for the importance of social capital is an argument for such influences (Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore 1982). Later work on Catholic schools (Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993) has also looked at internal community and social context. However, Catholic schools are distinctive in part because they are religious schools; there are religious imperatives for inclusion that may have a major effect both on inclusion of all students and on achievement. Selection and deselection at Catholic schools is also more responsive than is selection to suburban housing to subtle dimensions of parents' and students' academic seriousness not captured by measurable social indicators.

While these effects may be most strikingly visible in Catholic schools, it is my hypothesis that, if we looked, we would find the kind of social capital described in Catholic schools also in many suburban schools, especially in small, high status suburbs. Indeed there is a small literature growing using High School and Beyond data that does investigate such questions (Hannaway and Talbert 1993; Purkey and Rutter 1987) However, in those settings, one can not easily study the effects on low achieving students from low status backgrounds, because many such schools have very few, if any such students. If they do have them, they may be present under court orders or controversial housing arrangements that lead to a sense of separation and their formal or informal internal segregation in the schools.

There is another question about the interpretation of the original findings of a lack of impact of the things that money can buy on student achievement, once social class is held constant. I would argue that we have been too quick to dismiss the impact of even these variables because of their lack of correlation with achievement after students' social class is held constant.[17] The lack of impact of these inputs might be affected by holding the social class of students constant when that in effect also holds constant the social class of communities. Differences in school variables that one then measures such as those in financial resources, in training of teachers, and so forth, are then mostly differences between schools that have both communities and student bodies similar in social class. These input variables may take on quite different meanings in different class contexts and therefore variation in them may have different consequences in different settings. To average them all together is then to get a finding of "no impact" when there may be several, quite distinct impacts.

Consider, just as examples, the meaning of a new well-equipped school facility in the midst of an affluent suburb with private and public buildings similarly well-equipped. Then consider the same building, set down in a neighborhood with boarded up windows, leaking roofs, and uncertain plumbing. It may not be immediately evident what the different meanings and effects of the building will be for the staff and students in each setting, but it seems fairly certain that they will not be the same. There are likely similarly to be differences in the meaning and impact of an old, dilapidated building in such different contexts.

Similarly, consider the meaning of a staff of experienced teachers in an affluent suburb, a stable working class community, and a poor area of an inner city. Teachers who have worked in the same school for twenty-five years in each of those settings will fairly certainly be different from beginning teachers in each setting. But will their approach to education born of twenty-five years of experience in these different settings be similar to each other? One can reasonably doubt that it would. Thus to study the effects of teachers' experience on achievement across the sample and find "no difference" may be to mix together very different substantive practices with possibly opposite effects on student achievement.

In the same way, one can imagine that the books bought for libraries in schools in affluent suburbs and in central cities or poor rural schools may be different books. For example one of our high status suburban schools was well stocked with literature and social science books that might be read in the first two years of college, while the librarian at Charles Drew was proud of purchasing recent encyclopedias so that students would have the most contemporary set available. Policies that allow students to use library books may vary in these different settings. Even given identical libraries and ready access to them, students' ability to read and interest in reading those books might differ, with consequences for their achievement. Thus the number of volumes in the library tells us very little about educational influences on students.

The research that has been done that begins to tell us about processes in

schools that differ in social class that may make a difference for students' learning or their persistence in school is mostly qualitative research based on a small number of schools--as is the study on which this paper is based. However, newer surveys that have much richer indicators of internal school life than were available in the early Coleman study and in many of those that followed it, make it possible to begin to ask questions about these issues on a national scale with quantitative data. Newer statistical methods that make it easier to look at several organizational levels at once would also facilitate such efforts.

Despite the presence of a few articles investigating this line of thinking (Hannaway and Talbert 1993; Purkey and Rutter 1987), several reviews in the sociology of education (Bennett and LeCompte 1990; Knapp and Woolverton 1995; Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993; Persell 1993) note lack of attention to the question of the ways in which schools in communities that differ in social class affect the practices of their staffs or the experiences of their students. I think there are many reasons for this lack of interest, but certainly one is the finding of the Coleman study and those following in its tradition that differences between schools, at least public schools, do not seem to have an important impact on student achievement, once one holds constant the social class of the students. I suggest that the way the question is formulated is an individualistic one that obscures, veils, differences that sociologists of education in their roles as parents do indeed believe exist and are fateful for their children and their friends.

A Second Study--Return to Schools That Differ in Social Class

The 1985-86 study of high school teachers' working lives became a study of the impact of community social class upon them. I wrote several articles based on that data.[18] It was my intention to write a book that blended the analysis of differences in the schools based in community social class and commonalities based in Real School, but other responsibilities intervened. In 1995, I used a confluence of a sabbatical semester and a grant for some student assistance[19] to return to five of the original schools to look at them with the effects of community social class as my formal focus. We nearly replicated the original study in these schools. We followed student schedules to observe classes, interviewed all the teachers we had observed before who were still there, interviewed and observed enough others to make up a sample of eight teachers whom we interviewed systematically and in depth, and interviewed a few other teachers whose positions rounded out our view of the school. I also interviewed the principals, all of whom were new, as well. We also collected documents, as before. As I write this paper, I am in the midst of writing the integrative book I had originally hoped to write, using both sets of data.[20]

In the rest of this paper, I will suggest in a schematic way some of the channels through which differences in the social class of a community affect the working lives of high school teachers and therefore their practice. I will use illustrative data from the five schools we revisited. A discussion of this length can not document, only illustrate, its

arguments with data. This was not a study of students; we saw the students mostly through the teachers' eyes and from our observations of their behavior in classes and in the halls of the schools. The study does not allow for a direct tracing of the impact of the practices we saw on student achievement.

A Schematic Discussion of the Impact of Community Social Class on High School Teachers' Work

As I have already remarked, we found the differences in schools in communities that differed in social class to be striking. Perhaps one of the most striking things about these differences was that they were differences in "business as usual". Sometimes teachers took practices at their schools that we found to be reflections of their class location so much for granted that they felt no need to comment on them and were surprised when we might ask about them. Sometimes they did see differences and either expressed their gratitude and pleasure about them or complained that it was difficult to do something that they could call genuine[21] high school teaching in such a context.

Overview. The script of Real School was in place everywhere and that did indeed create many regularities worthy of note. All the schools shared the layout of buildings with long hallways and identical classrooms, the daily schedule, the pattern of classes of from twenty to thirty students (occasionally more or less), the curricular scope and sequence, and the responsibility of teachers to teach five classes a day unless "released" for special duties.

At the same time, these regularities were enacted with noticeable differences. To begin the analysis, consider just some of the ways in which these regularities also evidenced easily visible differences. While all the buildings had long halls, and "egg crate" classrooms, high SES Maple Heights almost resembled a college campus, with its several buildings and a broad front lawn, while low SES Charles Drew's modernistic building resembled a fortress with plexiglass windows that had grown so milky that they were not transparent. The daily schedule was similar everywhere, but the degree to which it was honored, with students in the classroom by the ringing of the bell, was very different. The higher the SES of the school, the more likely that all students were in class on time and the halls were clear and quiet during class periods. At low SES Drew and to a lesser extent low SES Grant at our first visit, students ambled in through the first ten minutes of class and there were always students in the halls. Attendance was very high at the high SES schools, while a third to a half of students were missing in both low SES schools from large proportions of classes. Even at working class Pinehill, where attendance was between these extremes, some teachers complained bitterly of the difficulty of teaching a class of twenty-eight when seven or eight students came irregularly.

As I have already suggested, even when course titles and texts were identical, the content and rhythm of conversation and activity in classes at the different schools

could be very different indeed. In very general terms, there was far more intensity, richer information, and more time on task the higher the SES of the school. Even though teachers taught five classes a day, those at the schools high in social class enjoyed two preparation periods, while those at the working class and poor schools had supervisory duties in addition to classroom teaching that allowed them only one preparation period per day.

To take a more analytical approach to differences between the schools in pressures on teachers that affected their practice, I will first consider resources that supported teachers, then I will look at four tasks with which all the schools had to be concerned, even though only one, academic education, constitutes their formal goal. The other tasks are the maintenance of custody and control over minors; the evaluation, sorting, and certifying of the differential accomplishments and talents of the students; and the general socialization of children.

Though the picture was a complicated one and differences were not simply linear, a very brief summary indicates that the higher the SES of the school the more resources in things that money can buy--staff, materials, and time--were available. There were also differences in the degree to which the resources that were available, both monetary and social, were marshaled to support teachers in their core academic work. While all the schools had to pay attention to the three tasks other than academic education that I discuss, the higher the SES of the school the less these other tasks conflicted with or drew energy away from the academic task.

Resources. For the daily experience of teachers, perhaps the most visible and important difference in resources lay in the provision of two preparation periods each day, in addition to a lunch period, for teachers at the two high SES schools. Teachers at the other schools had other duties in periods beyond their five classes and one lunch period. They might supervise a study hall, patrol halls or locker areas, be available for student consultations, or supervise the cafeteria.[22] At the high SES schools, special personnel were hired whose sole duty was to supervise study halls. There were also resource programs of various kinds designed to meet students' academic and personal needs staffed by other personnel or by teachers for whom these activities counted as a class responsibility.

Further, at the high SES schools, teachers were encouraged to engage in a number of departmental or committee activities that involved improvement of either curriculum or pedagogy. Some of these committees took teachers' "free" time, but often teachers worked on them over the summer and were paid for these efforts. Further, they were encouraged, and often given small amounts of funds to participate in short term professional development activities such as workshops that might require the hiring of a substitute. At working class Pinehill, though there were a few formal curricular efforts in departments, they were few. Some teachers collaborated on their own time, and some spoke with resentment of having been denied even very small amounts of money for professional development activities. At Grant, aside from a few

inservices on topics planned at the district level, professional collaboration and professional development activities were virtually absent at our first visit, and the result of individual teachers' initiative at our second. (However, at low SES Charles Drew, which, somewhat atypically, aggressively sought private grants; such activities were available for at least some teachers.)

Materials were more plentiful, the higher the SES of the school. Further, while photocopying materials had its difficult elements at all the schools, facilities for it were more convenient and available to teachers the higher the SES of the school. At the low SES schools, there often were not enough books for students to have their own; sets were kept in classrooms. Without enough books for each student to have one, students could not take books with them for work in study hall or at home. There were some special federally funded programs at the low SES schools that had more plentiful supplies.

Parents were much in evidence at the high SES schools. There were volunteers staffing offices in clerical and receptionist positions, especially at Cherry Glen. These women greeted visitors with aplomb and went about their tasks with apparent efficiency. Their manner suggested ease in their roles and their dress a status at least as high as that of the teachers. We saw only one or two parent volunteers at the working class schools and at low SES Grant. At Charles Drew, the principal told us on our first visit that parents had time to volunteer but they required so much training that the investment required from the school was not worth the return. At our second visit, after powerful parent councils had been established districtwide, the new administrators told us proudly of the active parent volunteers in offices and of the fact that some had learned skills in these roles that made them eligible for paid clerical employment to which they later moved.

While we heard about parents who were cooperative and helpful in working with their children's teachers at the low SES Drew, because the staff made a big effort to involve parents, most of these cooperative efforts concerned improving students' attendance and diligence in studying or joint efforts to keep them out of gangs. At low SES Grant, teachers reported some such alliances, but more efforts to develop them that failed. At working class Pinehill we heard little about parents as a force, though there were occasional complaints of parental negligence or interference and scattered stories of alliances to bolster the efforts of a particular student.

At the high SES schools, parents were a visible force to be reckoned with. Often students could draw on their parents' skills based in advanced education as they developed academic projects. We heard about students with special talents, especially at Maple Heights, that were in fields where their parents were prominent in the larger metropolitan community. At the same time, parents in these communities could be very demanding of the school staffs on behalf of their individual children's wants and needs and could be very critical. Their active presence was both a resource for the teachers' efforts and a drain on their energies for students as a whole.

The suburban high schools were in small districts of one or two high schools; the city high schools were one among many. While the suburban schools' staffs sometimes found their communities and central offices more attentive to their internal affairs than they would have liked, the district structures were responsive to their practical needs. The city schools, on the other hand, had to deal with large bureaucracies with patterns unresponsive to their needs to get many tasks such as physical repairs handled. One city building had visible damage from a roof leak that was eight years old at our second visit while another was getting a roof repair six months after a storm caused major roof damage. The principal at Drew had to go "downtown" herself to sit on the doorstep of the office that could repair the only photocopy machine in the school until they agreed to send a repairperson many days after the request was first made.

Similarly, the city schools were subject to the interference of an array of commissions and citizens groups--composed mostly of citizens of the suburbs--commenting on their performance and suggesting and setting policies for the city schools. There was no parallel exterior involvement in the affairs of the suburban schools--though state regulations and occasional incidents that attracted the notice of the metropolitan media did have effects on them. The city schools also were subject to the direct ministrations of members of a central office staff who did not know their individual schools well. Because these outside controllers, especially the external commissions and the highest level central office staff, were at considerable physical and social distance from the schools and not well acquainted with the day to day work of the schools, their efforts for control could not be fine-tuned to the efforts of individual schools.

Both low SES schools we studied were subject, by our second visit, to systems that required them to meet quantitative standards in an array of academic and disciplinary areas; these mandates came down as commands to find a way to improve the indicators or face the reorganization of the school and reassignment of its staff. School staff resented the use of judgement on generalized summary indicators without consideration of some of their idiosyncratic difficulties or their sense of priorities in attempting to work effectively. Further, they resented the threat of punishment of the staff for failure to meet more or less arbitrary benchmarks, as they struggled to deal with the complex reality of working with vividly concrete groups of students whose individual and collective needs and behavior were complex. (In our second visit to Grant, there was some sign that the Central Office in this system of less than fifteen high schools was giving some consideration to this very active principal's distinctive way of working.)

Finally, the schools in these different districts were in quite different positions with regard to their resources for hiring--and firing--their teachers. The pool of applicants for each position in the high SES suburbs was far larger than that at the schools in the cities; we heard about a ratio of 200 applicants to one position at high SES Maple Heights and about a ratio of two to one in The City. Further, in the small suburban districts, applicants applied for particular positions. Principals (and

sometimes teachers) had a direct say in hiring. In the cities, hiring was done by a central agency for the district as a whole and teachers were assigned to schools without choice on either their part or that of the principal. In the high SES settings, principals could choose their teachers from large pools of applicants according to quite demanding criteria, while in the city with a radically lower ratio of applicants to positions, the practical qualifications were fewer and lower.

Once teachers were hired, in the high SES suburbs, principals with small numbers of new teachers had the time for extensive observation of and advice to untenured teachers. With a small number of new teachers they also could gather the information required to document a decision for non-renewal. At Maple Heights such decisions were in process at both our visits. By contrast, the city principals and teachers had fewer untenured teachers because many vacancies were filled by transfer of tenured teachers rather than by hiring teachers new to the district. Thus, these schools did not have control over the teachers entering the school and might well have new, but tenured, teachers who were unsatisfactory. There were also some teachers of long standing they found difficult. Principals told us of, and we came across, cases of teachers with problems of inattention, incompetence, or personal difficulty that principals could not directly dismiss--though the more activist principals found some ways to encourage voluntary transfers. These transfers, of course, simply moved problematic teachers to another school of a similar kind in the same system. Some teachers of dubious strength were visible at the suburban schools, as well, but they were a much smaller proportion of the whole. Small Maple Heights was the most successful in preventing the tenuring of such teachers.[23]

One of the findings that we did not expect from our study was a pattern of considerable matching of the social class background and current lifestyle of teachers and the communities in which they taught. This was not a perfect sorting, but it was noticeable pattern. We found many teachers from upper middle class backgrounds with upper middle class social networks in the high SES schools. There was a perceptible difference between them, as a group, and the teachers with working class backgrounds and networks in the same schools in terms of the kind of knowledge they made available to students and in terms of their attitudes toward students and parents.

At working class Pinehill, we found the school recruited almost completely from the contiguous working class suburbs and that almost all the teachers lived in those suburbs. Pinehill was a relatively new suburb, but by our second visit a pattern of hiring its own graduates was beginning to take root. The school's program consequently reflected a localism that was based in both social class and geography. With a handful of strong exceptions, the staff's vision for the school and their interpretation of curriculum was very different from the vision of teachers at either of the high SES schools.

At the city schools, teachers had a greater range of class backgrounds and current class associations. Since they had to be college educated, and the vast

majority of parents were not, they could not simply match the backgrounds of their student bodies. At Charles Drew, with a student body that had been completely African American for a quarter century at the time of our second study, the faculty was about three fourths African-American and the administration completely so. There is a strong middle class African-American community in The Metropolis and most of these teachers belonged to it. Many of them had southern roots, some middle class, some in poverty, that seemed to play a part in a sense of obligation toward their students as well as in a subtle southern flavor in the school despite its geographical distance from the south. Many of these African-American teachers, as well as a smaller proportion of the white teachers at the school, were teaching in The Metropolis because of their genuine dedication to the welfare of poor African-American students.

At Grant, on the other hand, at the time of our first visit, all but a handful of the faculty and all but one of the administrators were white, while the student body included increasingly large proportions of African-American students, about sixty percent at our first visit. Students of all races were also getting progressively poorer. Most teachers felt very alienated from their new student body. At the time of our second visit, after considerable turnover, there was substantial diversity in the backgrounds and perspectives of the new faculty though they still were about three quarters white, while the student body was more than three quarters children of color, mostly African-American. It is important to remember in this context, that in both urban systems teachers could not choose their particular schools and principals could not choose the teachers.[24]

In short, then, while the picture was more complex and contradictory than this short account can make clear, the higher the SES of the school, the more resources teachers had in time and materials. The higher the SES of the district, the more moral and financial support teachers received for continuing professional development either in work together within the school or district or for activities alone or in groups beyond the district. Also the higher the SES of the school, the more parents took initiative to volunteer to be helpful with the regular program and special activities and the more they were able to contribute to students' academic activities at home. They did, however, also expect responsiveness to particularistic needs of their children, or categories of students to which their children belonged, that teachers found undercut their agendas with classes as wholes. The higher the SES of the community, the more sophisticated the prior training of teachers as a whole. At both the high SES and working class suburban schools, teachers' perspectives about schooling and knowledge reflected the culture of the community--though at Cherry Glen this picture was more complex than at Maple Heights and Pinehill. These perspectives tended to keep students where they were in the class hierarchy. (At all the suburban schools, all but a few students and teachers were white--though Maple Heights and Pinehill had more students of color most of whom were bused to the schools from The City under a state law related to a desegregation suit.) In the city schools, the match of teachers to students was a more complicated affair in terms of racial as well as class attitudes. Teachers who actively chose to teach in schools like the one they were serving tended to have higher morale

and effort than those teaching new populations because of demographic shifts or involuntary transfers in a city system.

Custody and Control. While schools exist primarily for the sake of the academic education of their charges, there is no question that they are expected and required by the society to take care of other tasks as well, as part of their responsibility for oversight of developing minors who will form the next generation. Important among these tasks is the school's obligation to see to the safety of children during school hours and to be sure that it can account for the whereabouts of all the children supposed to be in its charge on a given day. Thus schools must keep very careful records of attendance and must look into the whereabouts of children not present. They must protect the children in the school from harm from outsiders, but they must also prevent them from harming each other. These issues blend into the question of general socialization of students into attitudes and behavior expected in public life.

These custodial tasks require attention at all schools, but they are much more difficult at schools in poor areas and they are easiest at the high SES schools. Still, there are real custodial problems at all schools. At the high SES schools many teachers talked about noticeable proportions of students involved with drug and alcohol to the point where these substances interfere with the students' school performance, including their behavior and attention during the school day. Smoking in the bathrooms and other unsupervised areas was an issue at all the schools but especially high SES Cherry Glen and working class Pinehill. Both high SES schools made institutional provisions for students so distracted by family problems that they needed structured help from the school. At high SES Cherry Glen, which was run with a tight, even taut, control from the principal downward at our first visit, even he had instituted "open" study hall for upper classmen with adequate grades which became mostly a social hour. He thought it would diffuse some tension. When we returned to the school under a new principal, control was less pervasive. There had been some incidents of hazing by upper classmen and a mass hazing at a school meeting in the gymnasium where upper classmen hurled "superballs" at the freshmen opposite them with a force capable of harming those who were hit in the face or other vulnerable areas.

Custodial problems were more serious among the general student population at working class Pinehill. Absence from class that did not seem to be related to illness was a serious problem at Pinehill, even though the majority of students in a class were always present. There were enough behavioral problems in class, so that the in-school suspension program known as "The Freezer" was an integral part of school life. Students came reluctantly to class, lingering in the hall until the last minute. During our first visit, public displays of affection between male and female students were frequent and usually carried on with maximum publicity, as in the door of a classroom, but rarely in the privacy of a lightly used stairwell or even in nooks somewhat out of the flow of traffic. These displays thus took on the character of statements of disaffection with the business of the school. Students, especially during our first visit, had successfully driven bargains with most teachers such that teachers would assign homework for the

last five to fifteen minutes of class time and almost all students would openly use this time for a social hour. While we heard less about drugs and alcohol as distractions from school at Pinehill, they were doubtless present to some degree. It was at Pinehill just before our second visit that a sports team that had just won a state competition were found using controlled substances in a motel room--touching off brief coverage in all the local media and a round of short term expulsions.

These real custodial problems had an impact on the classroom at the high and middle SES schools, but they paled beside custodial problems at the low SES schools. Custodial problems were a major preoccupation at the two low SES schools during both our visits. Students had to thread their way to school through a path where gangs would try to recruit them and where waiting for a bus to transfer on the way to school could put them in hostile gang territory. As a consequence their strategies of avoidance often made them late to school, and their minds must have been somewhat preoccupied with anticipation of the journey home after school. Students from both schools had been shot, though not on school grounds, during the fall before our visits in October and November 1995. Weapons had been found on school property. In 1995 students entered Drew each day through a metal detector intended for beeper batteries as well as weapons.

Although both of these schools were in general successful in keeping gang activities outside the schools, gang members were present and relationships were combustible. It was important to watch activity in the halls with care. Both schools had a significant crew of aides whose sole duties were custodial. Both had a higher proportion of assistant principals to students than did the other schools; those administrators spent much of their time on issues of attendance, discipline of misbehavior, and safety. Dollars and energies that could be spent supporting the academic program at other schools, as in hiring aides to oversee study halls, were spent on custodial issues at these schools.

Students had many adultlike demands in their lives outside school, including care of younger siblings and of their own children that often made them miss all or part of a school day. Steady academic progress with a class was undercut by the constantly shifting set of faces in the classroom.

In short, while custodial duties drew resources and energies of school staffs away from academic efforts at all the schools, custodial problems and custodial duties were much larger at the low SES schools than at the others. Custodial problems also had a direct impact on classroom teaching in the form of absence and tardiness and in some cases of conflict between students or between students and teachers. These problems were more severe in the working class schools than the high SES ones and more severe in the schools for poor students than in the working class schools.

The Sorting Function of Schools. Teachers are, on the whole, aware of where the communities in which they teach stand in the social hierarchy of society. They are

aware that their schools stand in the same place as the community and that most of their children are likely to end up in more or less the same status as their parents. Since it is teachers' work to prepare students to participate in adult society and since their own craft is visible to others and even to themselves only in the results they create in the minds and lives of their students, they too are placed by the status of the community and its students. Teachers' sense of the results it was realistically possible for them to accomplish and their sense of their own identity were deeply affected by the social class of the community and the students. All were affected, though the attitudes and strategies with which individuals responded to these exigencies varied.

Students do not always end up in places like their parents. There is both downward and upward mobility. While the skills of students as a whole differed among the schools according to the social class of the community, there were individuals and groups who departed from the general pattern. Teachers responded to the skills of their students as well as to the overall place of the community. Nonetheless, where skills overlapped among the student bodies, the overall tenor of the community and school affected teachers' reactions to their students.

There were interesting local cultural elements in both the communities and the schools that colored the purposes and practices of teachers at all the schools. I can only suggest them briefly here. At high SES Maple Heights, the community was very high in educational level and in the level of occupation, but much lower in income. A small community, bordered by a Ph.D. granting branch of the state university, many of its adults were professionals of one kind or another. Many students went to private colleges, though more often to the better known small liberal arts colleges in the Midwest than to the Ivy League. The school put great emphasis on the arts and had an outstanding theater program that also involved music.

Especially at our first visit, there was a sense of patrician assurance among both the parents and the teachers at Maple Heights. There was an unspoken assurance that in this community students did so well academically that the school could afford efforts to look out for their happiness as well as their accomplishments. The new principal, from another district, wondered aloud whether the district might not be a bit complacent about the accomplishments of its students.

Across The City, and further from its borders, high SES Cherry Glen was home to business-oriented families some of whom were transferred in and out. Incomes were much higher than in Maple Heights, but parental educational levels were noticeably lower. Most of the most successful students at this school attended the flagship campus of the state university. Many of those attending private colleges went to little known institutions that presumably might admit those who did not meet the requirements of this flagship campus which were quite high, and, to the school's chagrin, on first screening based on a cutoff point in class rank.

This school put a great emphasis on skills. The principal of long tenure told us

that if education can't be done well here, it can't be done. The school had a palpable sense of tension, of striving, of keeping every one up to the mark. The curriculum was much more skills based than at Maple Heights. The arts had a much lower status and the school had no theater, though it had lush and plentiful playing fields.

Partly through the efforts of the principal at our first visit, the teachers had a great deal of support for their role as professionals in academic fields. Part of what supported that role was the principal's efforts to be a go-between parents and teachers; he served to protect teachers' status as experts from parents who had less interest in knowledge for its own sake than did teachers. At our second visit, there were some signs of slight deterioration in those supports under the new principal; for example parents successfully transformed the school's advanced science program based on a requirement that advanced students do extended original experiments into one based on traditional reading and writing.

Working class Pinehill was the school least self-conscious about its position in a social hierarchy. Most of the teachers were local products from working class backgrounds. At our first visit in 1986 we heard much about their pride in their highly successful business curriculum that got their female students good clerical jobs in The City. (Its luster was beginning to fade as computers replaced secretaries and the women's movement called this role into question; on our return the department was struggling for its very survival.) The dominant group of teachers at Pinehill treated teaching as a job to be taken up in the morning and left when the last bell rang. They expected students to treat it similarly and most did. However, students did not always take it even that seriously, and when they did not teachers could be deeply offended. The extracurricular program was a place of more lively engagement and deeper relationships with students for many of the teachers.

All of what was just said was especially true for the men on the faculty. In a reflection of working class life, the school faculty was visibly and deeply separated along gender lines. More of the women engaged with their teaching and sought opportunities for professional development in their understanding of both subject matter and pedagogy. They discussed both individual students and teaching strategies with each other in the teacher's lounge--alongside personal topics--while the men had an unspoken taboo on discussing students and teaching. However, some of the younger men at our second visit brought their concern for the students as persons and for their accomplishments into the classrooms as well as the playing fields. The strict gender segregation of informal conversation had broken down.[25]

At urban Ulysses S. Grant during our first visit, the overwhelmingly white faculty with working class and middle class roots for the most part felt increasing dismay in their relationship to a student body that was growing poorer and more African-American in its composition each year. They spoke in tones that varied from aggressive expressions of martyrdom ("Welcome to working in the pits"), to scorn for the lack of skill and comprehension in their students, to tortured self-doubt at their inability to win

their students' interest in their best pedagogical efforts. They had no training for working with the students they were currently getting and they had little knowledge of or sympathy with their students' life patterns. Most of the few African-American teachers set themselves apart. They worked harder to reach their students and felt a good deal more sympathy with them than did most white teachers, though even they expressed a good many frustrations. The principal felt adrift and powerless between a student body he did not understand, a central office giving many directives, and a faculty whose frustrations he had no idea how to assuage.

The staff as a whole, though with exceptions, felt demeaned, frustrated, and powerless as both neighborhood change and citywide busing brought them not only more students of color but poorer students in all racial groups. They disidentified with their students. The made plentiful use of poor grades to show that whatever their students might be like, they, as high school teachers, were maintaining genuine high school standards.

On our return, a new principal, in place for eight years, had managed to create considerable turnover in the faculty through retirement and transfer. The remaining teachers and the new, mostly younger, teachers were on the whole much more sympathetic with the now even poorer students and much more willing to work constructively with them--though a good deal of frustration still was in evidence.

I have already spoken in the first section of this paper of the efforts of the all African-American administrative staff to make Charles Drew, with a poorer, less skilled student body than Grant's, into a school that could claim a curriculum as demanding as any high school. Because the social composition of the neighborhood had not changed much in the nearly twenty years preceding our first visit, time had winnowed the faculty at Drew selecting many who wanted to or at least accepted working with this kind of of student body. Probably a majority of the faculty at Drew, both African-American and white, wanted to work at a school like this and took it, usually in quiet ways, as a mission to help these teenagers who were getting so little support from their society at large. While there were teachers at Drew as angry and disillusioned or as withdrawn, as those at Grant, they were a definite, if still sizable, minority whose voices had little social resonance in the school.

As in the case of the other differences I have discussed, the distinctions between the schools were not simply linear. They were complex and multi-faceted. At the same time, when one draws away from them, there was an underlying linear pattern. In the dominant terms of success in our society, to work at the high SES schools was to have a far more positive reflection from the community and society--though sometimes the successful parents and students of these communities defined teachers as "just" a teacher.[26] At Pinehill, teachers felt in many respects comfortably at home because they were in the context in which they had grown up. Some felt that some of the students were sliding and thus reflecting ill on them, especially at our first visit. A small number who had been in more cosmopolitan contexts, chafed under the limitations of the

community. To work at the low SES schools was to have to struggle with the reflected negative images of the students and their communities. While this task took a toll at both low SES schools, the majority of teachers at Grant during our first visit, who found the newer students at the school alien to their experience, understood it very differently from the majority of teachers at Drew, many of whom shared racial oppression with their students, many of whom had come to the middle class from modest roots, and many of whom had actively chosen to work with poor students.

General Socialization. Schools are expected to serve a critical social function by teaching children to distinguish between the primary world of the family where they are valued for their unique selves, and the secondary relationships of public life where they must competently, predictably, responsibly and reliably play impersonal roles. Schools also are expected to teach them the attitudes and skills to play such roles. In so doing, schools must share with parents responsibility to teach children values and ways of behavior of a general sort--though the scope of their mandate in such matters is vague and contested. At the least schools are expected to teach values and ways of acting in public life consonant with proclaimed national values.

Public life gives us more rewards the higher in the social class hierarchy our roles may be. Thus, it is not surprising that students who expect the school to provide them a path to high status, like their parents, respond to the "hidden curriculum", the behavioral and social expectations of the schools, with more acquiescence, even more enthusiasm, than do those who expect the schools to lead them only to the low (or middle) status of their parents. Further, much of the cultural ambience of schools, their assumptions, thier values, and their cultural style, are based on the life experience of the middle class. Students from backgrounds lower in social class often experience dissonance between the schools' assumptions and their home and community experiences (Connell et al. 1982). This dissonance is even worse for working and lower class African-American students and other students of color (Fordham 1996; Foster 1997; Hemmings 1996; Hemmings 1998).

The issue of general socialization was a very complex one in these schools. First, the place of the high school in students' expected life trajectory was very important. Students at all SES levels sometimes questioned whether high school would do them any good, but on the whole the students in high SES schools wanted to do either reasonably well or as well as possible to get into college. In such a setting teachers could comfortably teach about a variety of matters that were related to but not part of academic work and even that were general advice for living. Students who took them as models were ready to take teachers' advice; other students at least felt it incumbent on them to listen politely to such teaching. In classes in English and social studies or advanced foreign language with the study of literature, teachers might raise issues of morality or expected behavior very much entwined with the subject matter. For example, discussion of the motivation of characters or the message of the author in literature, or discussions of the perspectives of various parties and the consequences for future generations at decision points in history raised issues of morality and

responsibility. Classes such as biology might lead to exhortation on issues of health. Issues of morality and behavior might arise in any class in the flow of classroom activity around matters of cooperation, honesty and so forth.[27]

At working class Pinehill, students held teachers at more of a distance at least in the classroom. Finishing high school seemed to be important to most students, but learning what was taught seemed much less important. It seemed to be on the playing fields and in other extracurricular activities that teachers forged relationships with students and that moral modeling or discourse could most comfortably take place. In higher tracks and with female students and teachers the classroom allowed for more general socialization. Also, at our second visit, as the community began to include more middle class families and as working class students were beginning to understand they would need schooling past high school, students seemed to hold their teachers a little less at arm's length in the classroom.

It was at the low SES schools that general socialization about how to behave in the public world and about moral matters was most visible. At Grant at our first visit, many teachers found students to be morally unworthy. They offered considerable unsought moral advice in classes in a way that often seemed adversarial. In talking to us, they bemoaned what they perceived to be the moral laxity of their students and their parents. At our second visit, an African-American principal with a background of the kind common at Drew, who had taken over right after our first visit, set a tone of explicit moral exhortation supported by a lot of one-on-one contact with both exemplary and difficult students. His approach seemed to be fairly well accepted by both teachers and students. He set a tone for the staff of respect for the students along with very firm expectations. At Drew in both visits there was much explicit moral teaching from the principal down through the staff. For the most part it was respectful, even though some teachers clearly felt privately very alienated from students.

The issue of general socialization was complex. General socialization, some of it moral, some of it more practical, took place in all the schools. Sometimes it was entwined with the lessons in a seamless way. At the other extreme, sometimes it was a jarring diatribe in which teachers lectured students on their moral failings. Sometimes it was subtle and completely inexplicit as teachers and students vied with one another over the level of serious attention and effort to be given to various academic projects.

Put very generally, at the high SES schools, on the whole and with most students, teachers felt there was enough common ground so that their general socialization could build on a foundation of common understandings and like-mindedness. They could teach students to be more perceptive, reflective, and sophisticated in their judgment. At the working class schools, there was more of a quiet standoff with students acquiescing in required behaviors most of the time, but developing a quiet tension with teachers over issues that went deeper--at least in the classroom. At the low SES schools, teachers were much more active in their general socialization because most felt that large numbers of students were headed onto dead

end paths. They had difficulty eliciting attention in the classroom and academic effort outside it on the part of their students. They had to use various strategies to encourage it and to point out its importance for students' own lives. They felt--whether sympathetic to the reasons or angry and judgmental about them--that students needed fundamental information about what society expected of them and what it could offer them if they would cooperate. Most thought that students needed a change of priorities. Thus general socialization tended to work in substitution for academic efforts, or at least as a prerequisite to them, rather than in synergy with them. Some skilled and sympathetic teachers constantly pushed toward synergy.

Put most briefly, when there was disjunction in values and behaviors between what teachers felt it was right to encourage students to do and what students brought into the school or did outside it as teachers perceived it, teachers tended to feel alienated from students and students from them. Where there was a greater feeling of harmony, students and teachers had more energy to work together. On the whole, there was more synergy around issues of general socialization the higher the SES of the schools, though that statement puts the case too baldly.

Academic Education. Because the structures that high schools use for academic education are similar, as are the curricular scope and sequence and to a great degree also the available text books, teachers have a strong sense of a national template that they should be following. At the high SES schools, with most classes teachers could afford to be restless with that template, to follow it while simultaneously reaching beyond it. They could replace or supplement textbooks with more challenging or varied material. Not all teachers took advantage of these opportunities. More did at Maple Heights than at Cherry Glen.

At the middle level, many teachers simply followed rather standard curricula and stayed fairly close to textbooks. At working class Pinehill, the giving of prewritten "notes" written out on overheads with teachers making mini lectures around them was a core routine for the majority of teachers, though not for all. The schools in the middle had the most varied student skills and the most tracking. There were some high track classes that went beyond texts and some low track classes where students struggled and resisted, and teachers attempted to find simpler ways of presenting core material.

At the low SES schools, many students' skills made it difficult for them to comprehend the materials or do the work of the template for high school. Irregular attendance whether caused by adult responsibilities, avoiding dangers in the streets, or the desire to avoid classes where they were not succeeding, compounded not only the problems of the absent students but those of the class as a whole. There was enough underlying student alienation so that if teachers were not reasonably skilled and firm classroom managers, classes could and did become very disorderly and little work of any kind was accomplished.

Despite the different constraints on schools in communities that differed in social

class, individual teachers still had a good deal of autonomy to create quite different classroom atmospheres within each school. There were orderly task-oriented classes with generally constructive relationships between teachers and students at every school. There were also classes where students resisted serious attention to the work at hand and had conflictual relationships with their teachers at every school. But even where classes were task-oriented, the level of discourse and the kind of discourse was noticeably more advanced the higher one went in SES among these schools. And even in disorderly, conflictual classes, more work was done by more students, the higher the SES of the school. Also the number of such classes was far smaller the higher one went in social class and the number of consistently task-oriented classes was far smaller the lower one went.

Further, even where a class was task-oriented, the intellectual level at which the same history textbook or the same Shakespeare play might be talked or written about was noticeably different. Thus classes with the same name and same books differed according to the social class level of the school as well as differing with individual teachers. This was true despite the fact that we heard students make very interesting observations in English and social studies classes at both low SES schools, especially Drew where they more often had an opportunity for substantive class discussion. When they made these observations, however, teachers were much less likely to follow them up than were teachers in high SES or even working class schools. Sustained class discussion leading from them was rare. Low writing skills made it difficult for students to develop these insights in written work. Science and math classes in which students' skills were low, no matter what their label, could turn into remedial classes as students struggled over elementary tools needed to do the formal work of the class.

The lower resources that teachers have for their academic work in schools as one goes down the scale in social class combine with the effects of non-academic tasks of schools to sap teachers' energies and to make their classroom tasks more difficult. Further, in high school, students' different skill levels associated with social class and the different vision of the place of high school in their life trajectories have a tremendous impact on teachers' daily work in the classroom. All of these come together in the daily interactions in high school classrooms, in the homework assignments that teachers can give, and in the responses that they make to them. This totality forms the context in which each individual student has an opportunity to learn in high school.That opportunity varies noticeably from Maple Heights or Cherry Glen to Pinehill and from Pinehill to Grant or Drew. It differs radically from Maple Heights or Cherry Glen to Grant or Drew.

Conclusion

The structural and technical regularities in the organization and conduct of secondary education in this country that one can see reflected in schools in the very different communities in this study are indeed very important both substantively and symbolically. In the absence of significant practical variation in the way high schools

conduct education, it is difficult to assess the practical strengths and weaknesses of the pattern I call Real School with confidence. I do not attempt such an assessment. For my argument here, it is more important that the symbolic importance those regularities take on as they form the basis for actual schools' claims to be Real Schools makes it very difficult even to think about introducing changes in these basic patterns--even when they are manifestly not having the effects hoped for from a high school.

It is tempting to see such structural and technical arrangements that are visible from the outside, and similar across settings, as the levers that most affect the educational experiences and learning of the nation's students as a whole. Some reformers think in terms of making sure these regularities are more consistently and more effectively enacted. Others question whether perhaps changes in the extent or nature of these regularities should be considered.

Important as those regularities are, they can hide from public scrutiny a great deal of what happens in schools that is critical for teachers' and students' experiences and for the latter's learning. While they are indeed very significant influences on life inside high schools, they provide a seriously incomplete list of the elements that affect teachers' and students' work together in a school. Their outline may be standard from school to school, and yet teachers' and students' experiences and the teaching and learning actually occurring may be very different.

Differences in the different resources available to schools in different communities and the different quality and balance of the diverse tasks they must all pursue, as well as the softer, less visible values and social interactions that pervade classroom life and other elements of the ways we do high school, add up to very large differences indeed. They create a wide range of lived experience and academic learning inside high schools all of which formally fit the parameters of Real School, looking at least moderately similar on paper.

Because of the formal similarity, there is a public sense of a fair race for individual students trying to succeed in an educational system that not only educates but sorts and certifies. The race seems fair, but most young people wind up with accomplishments that entitle them to wealth, power, and privilege similar to those acquired by their parents. Because of the less visible differences among schools of the kinds I have briefly suggested here, high schools in communities that differ in social class do produce widely different experiences for their teachers and their students. It is worth investigating whether these differences play a part in the widely different accomplishments of students. If they do, then these differences in schools are well worth intensive study as they ensure that most members of each new generation of young people take on the same high, middle, or low status as their parents.

The interpretation of data from a great deal of systematic quantitative research tends in a different way to cast a veil across the differences in the experiences of teachers and students in public schools in communities that differ in social class. It

suggests that the resources individual students bring to the schools based on the social class position of their parents are by far the most powerful factor affecting their academic achievement. The dominant perspective still suggests that the contributions of at least the public schools can do little to change the influence of parental social class for most students.

It is an interesting issue that this line of thinking is being challenged for Catholic schools, and thus in logic for all schools, but not being very actively explored in public schools. Part of the explanation for this approach, and for the high interest in Catholic schools, lies in the difficulty of changing the association of residential communities segregated by social class (and race) with schools similarly segregated. The difficulties faced by racial school desegregation give little encouragement for a program to break up either social class segregation in housing or its tight association with schooling.[28]

Most people do not see the ability of schools in high status communities to build on the advantages that parents are able to give their children as problematic, or even think of such schools as places where privilege compounds privilege. While research since the original Coleman report has in various ways led to increasing awareness that processes inside schools must contribute to school outcomes, differences among schools are thought about mostly in terms of problems in schools that serve the students who bear the most disadvantage. There is a tendency to think of them as getting less than a "regular" education. Because Catholic schools that serve these students exclusively or include them with higher status students--as suburban schools much more rarely do--often do better than public schools in educating them, there is a very understandable interest in Catholic schools. This kind of interest in what the schools contribute to students' achievement, while it is discovering the importance of hitherto little discussed elements of school life, does not look at the differences in public schools serving the full range of social classes to discover systematic differences.

The very modest study I report does not have a weight of data that could call into question any of the received findings concerning the role of social class in producing differences in educational outcomes. But taken together with the conceptual analysis here, it may create some impetus for reconsidering whether researchers are asking the right questions. It gives some beginnings at suggesting other questions we might ask.

Differences in functioning of schools in different social class settings are very effectively hidden from view both by talk of The American High School as a single, unified institution along with the actual regularities of Real School and by sociological analysis that sees individual students' social class background as the source of their differences in academic achievement. Even if one uncovers differences within the schools clearly flowing from community social class, not individuals' efforts and skills, it is difficult to think of what one can do about the effects of community social class on the education that is offered differentially to the nation's students. Residential patterns are difficult to change. Conventional wisdom that opportunity is contracting makes parents

at the turn of the twenty-first century even more determined to garnish as many advantages for their children as possible than were parents in the 1960s and 70s who resisted racial school desegregation.

Still, responsible researchers have to understand existing patterns even when they are difficult to change. Such understanding, and public discussion of it, is the first step to change. Much deeper study of the social processes affecting teachers and students in schools that differ in social class than is possible with this small sample should be high among the priorities of the field of sociology of education. Without such study, we can not really understand how high schools operate as organizations, how and why teachers teach as they do, or how schooling affects students.

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END NOTES

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2. In the southeastern states, school districts often serve whole counties. Slightly different dynamics apply, though some of the same processes occur within districts that can occur between them.

3. There is considerable attention to this question in what has come to be known as the critical tradition, from (Bowles and Gintis 1976) onward. Much of the relevant literature is theoretical, and very helpful in thinking about the kinds of questions to ask (e.g. Apple 1986; Bourdieu 1973). There is also a growing empirical literature in this tradition, mostly based in ethnographies (for example Anyon 1981; Anyon 1997; Connell et al. 1982; Fine 1991; Foley 1990; Lareau 1989; Weis 1990; Willis 1977). Unfortuneately, for a variety of reasons, this literature is not fully involved in an ongoing conversation with literature of other traditions in sociology of education or educational research. This is a great loss for the rest of the field, because its insights are very important.

There is a small qualitative sociological literature outside the critical tradition that pays attention to the effects of class on teachers' practice (Cookson and Persell 1985; Hargreaves 1988; Knapp and Shields 1991). A few other sociologists (eg. Biklen 1995; Joffe 1977; McPherson 1972) have given us glimpses of how teachers interact differentially with parents of differing social class. Rubin (1972) gives a detailed analysis of differences in parents' reactions to a proposed racial desegregation plan, depending on the position within the district in which their own class and residential location placed them. Political scientist Edward Morgan's (1977) mixed method study analyzes the degree of democratic learning teachers make available in

different tracks and in schools that differ in social class.

Anthropologists have paid more attention to teachers than have sociologists, but they have looked more at teachers' response to differences of race than to differences of class. Still, Heath (1983), Lubeck (1985) Wilcox (1982) and Rist (1973; 1978) have produced case studies of teachers of very young children showing interactions of class and race with teachers' treatment of their students. Erickson (1987) has ably summarized a large literature on teachers' interactions with students, mostly elementary students, from various racial groups. His analysis of classroom problems arising from cultural differences based in race can easily be extrapolated to those based on class. In practice the two are often combined and confounded.

A few authors from education have noted that teachers have difficulty in maintaining their academic focus and commitment when confronted with socially and racially diverse student bodies that are also academically heterogeneous (Cusick 1983; Grant 1988; McNeil 1986; Powell, Farrar and Cohen 1985). Brantlinger and her colleagues (1996) and Oakes and her colleagues (Oakes et al. 1997) discuss the attitudes of upper middle class families toward mixing of students by race, social class, or achievement either in schools or in classes. Page (1991) and Lipman (1997) show in some considerable detail how faculties in schools located in neighborhoods that differ in social class within diverse districts, respond differently to their students, including in Page's case lower track students and in Lipman's students of color. Some other qualitative studies in education give tantalizing descriptions and partial analyses of the impact of class on teachers' practice, without approaching the issue systematically (Lightfoot 1983; Nordstrom, Friedenberg and Gold. 1967'; Perrone 1985; Popkewitz, Tabachnick and Wehlage 1982).

4. Kozol is not cited in a recent collection of work on financial discrepancies in education funding, mostly by economists of education, that purports to represent all sides in the debate on whether money matters to the outcomes of schooling (Burtless 1996).

5. Originally there were ten schools. Two rural schools were never studied for lack of resources. We did study two Catholic schools, one middle class and one working class, but their religious character was so important that they require a separate treatment.

6. I am very grateful to Annette Hemmings and Alexander Tyree for their assistance in this work.

7. Our thanks to Jeffrey Jacobson for his part in this effort. He was particularly interested in rural schools and so did an independent study of administrators at two rural schools using the same format for his dissertation study.

8. All proper names related to the schools and districts are pseudonyms.

9. Some schools serving populations of students whose skills are below formal grade level very intentionally teach basic skills through substantively advanced material. One can after all write

complete sentences about almost any topic, though it is a little more difficult to teach physics or even chemistry without some advanced mathematics. At Drew, the approach seemed less such an integrative one, and more a matter of alternating between remedial and advanced instruction within the same class.

10. We did not have enough data to judge the technical effectiveness of this strategy in improving students' actual learning.

11. Although I was well familiar with the work on institutional regularities in schools by Meyer and Rowan (1978), I did not initially turn to it in sorting out these two puzzling experiences. The regularities that Meyer and Rowan discuss in certification of teachers, the structure of grades, etc. are even more abstracted than those my luncheon partners were tacitly referring to and those that Drew struggled to maintain that I came to call Real School. Meyer and Rowan are of course talking about similar processes as they discuss the ways that regularities in schools create a symbolic unity that hides a large array of actual differences. They do not relate these differences to the structures of social class differentiation that I discuss, though they do relate them to differences in quality among the states.

12. My article expressing these ideas about "Real School" appeared in a fairly obscure collection (Metz 1990b). To my surprise, several scholars cited it. It clearly had a wide resonance. David Tyack and Larry Cuban even picked up the term and made it their own in their historical treatment of the intractably similar and unchangeable forms of schooling, Tinkering Toward Utopia (1995). In an article written three years after mine, Tyack had earlier used the evocative term "the grammar of schooling" (Tyack and Tobin 1994) for these regularities.

13. As I note in the conclusion of this paper, there is increasingly a footnote to the concept of The American High School, noting that schools in poor urban areas, occasionally including poor rural areas, are different. But this footnote indicates that these schools are, probably temporarily, removed from the category of regular and real American high schools, to which fold they should be speedily returned.

14. See the recent review by Oakes, Gamoran and Page (1992) who approach the question from three different perspectives.

15. Two useful reviews are those by Purkey and Smith (1983) and Rosenholtz (1985). Some founding documents are those by Rutter and his colleagues (Rutter et al. 1979), Brookover and his colleagues (Brookover et al. 1979) and Edmonds (Edmonds 1979).

16. Wilbur Brookover did do some research along this line. (Brookover et al. 1979)

17. The problem of the unit of analysis is important here as well. High track students may get all the experienced teachers with advanced degrees and all the access to the books in the library while low track students toil on work sheets in their classrooms with the few inexperienced or scantily trained teachers in a school. The consequence of such a pattern would be a dispersion of

achievement that averages in a middle range.

18. Aside from the article on the structural regularities and symbolic importance of Real School (Metz 1990b), I wrote several on the differences among the schools that seemed to be fostered by differences in the social class of the community (Hemmings and Metz 1990; Metz 1990a; Metz 1993).

19. This was one of a set of unsolicited grants given by the Spencer Foundation to individual faculty with a reputation for working well with apprentice graduate students, to use for the development of their students' research skills. I am deeply grateful for the grant and for the assistance of Barbara Golden, Eden Inoway-Ronnie, and Katherine Rhoades recipients of this grant. I am equally grateful to Janet Bixby and Jennifer Doerfler who joined in this project, though supported by funds not under my control.

20. I am indebted to the Spencer Foundation for the grant that supports this writing work. The Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin also supported the early months of this final writing.

21. Teachers tended to refer to "real teaching" in this context, meaning effective teaching or genuine teaching. As I have worked on this project I have noted the many meanings of the term "real" referring to schools, teaching etc. as well as to other topics. (My team and I noted references to "real religion" and "real research" for example.) Real seems to have three meanings as applied to schools. It can be used in the sense of symbolic legitimacy in which I use it, with a capital. It can refer to effective, genuine, successful efforts. It can also mean actual schools as opposed to those talked about in the abstract by persons not well acquainted with daily realities.

22. There were some variations in this pattern at Drew and Pinehill during one of our visits to each when the schools had ten period days.

23. High SES Cherry Glen, with a mostly handpicked high school faculty was changed from a 10-12 to a 9-12 school. Teachers transferred en masse from the junior high school, many of whom had a visibly different perspective than the one carefully nurtured at the high school. They were tenured and experienced; so the principal and older high school teachers faced a task of resocialization.

24. Experienced teachers could request transfers to particular schools, but the slots were awarded by seniority. Further, teachers who were laid off because of falling enrollments had to seek transfers to any opening where they had sufficient seniority. One of our white interviewees at Drew was devastated after having to leave a school with a working class white population where he had taught for many years to have to finish his career at Drew. Principals skilled in the fine points of the system could gain a little control, for example by defining a position in peculiar ways, often combinations of subjects tailored to particular candidates. The first principal we saw at Drew and the second at Grant had these kinds of skills.

25. Working class Quincy had the most diverse student body in terms of social class; it also was about twenty-five percent African-American, while Pinehill had very small proportion of students of color, mostly bused from The City. At Quincy the faculty were less comfortable in their roles than at Pinehill. They spoke of having to "be realistic" to make their curricula more practical than they would like. This faculty felt a cut above their students.

26. Parents and students in affluent Cherry Glen did occasionally condescend to teachers as beneath their family status. They expected deference to their own convenience from them and even made explicit slighting comments.

27. As Jackson and his colleagues point out (1993), the most pungent moral lessons in classrooms occur in the flow of classroom life, not as separate, preplanned homilies.

28. One could argue that the movement for choice is a step in this direction, though the ironies and complexities of such an argument would take us far beyond the scope of this paper.